

## ***“Mayday”***

As Dr. Burton A. Clark of the National Fire Academy writes: “Firefighters do not like to admit that they might need to be rescued. The delay in calling a “Mayday” may be caused by many factors, but three need to be addressed immediately: (1) the stigma associated with admitting to yourself and letting others know you need help, (2) not having been given clear rules for calling a Mayday, and (3) the manner in which the fire service makes decisions.

The firefighter must demonstrate the ability to call Mayday under various emergency situations. The minimum: being trapped or lost in a room, having something collapse on him/her such as a ceiling, being stuck or caught on something such as wires, and falling through a floor or roof. These conditions must be simulated using props with the firefighter in full PPE, SCBA, and portable radio in a blacked-out face mask. The firefighter must send the Mayday call.

Every fire produces anxiety despite the experience level of firefighters. Learning to manage it is something many firefighters accomplish over the years. Yet, when trapped, primal fear takes over and only hands on, realistic training can provide the way out via a Mayday.

In discussions with firefighters who have called a Mayday, the only substitute for the real incident has been extensive practice. Training kicks in despite the pressure. Without training it ***might*** work but professionals don't like the word “might”.

DPSST delivers the “Mayday” course throughout Oregon. Consisting of classroom and skills-related training, our staff provides pertinent and timely evolutions during the course of instruction.







